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15 MAY 1979

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Collection Summary

The Kurdish Problem

Background

The Kurds comprise a separate ethnic group located primarily in the mountainous regions of northern Iraq, northwestern Iran, eastern Turkey and adjacent areas of the Soviet Union. Throughout most of this century (and earlier), the Kurds have been seeking an independent state, or at least autonomy and insurgent movements have been the rule rather than the exception. [REDACTED]

Over the years, one or more of these states have encouraged insurgent Kurds in a neighboring state for political gain. However, the fact that such encouragement carries a high risk and that each (particularly Turkey, Iraq and Iran) is vulnerable to retaliation, has served to some degree as a constraint on such activities. In 1975, these constraints led Iran and Iraq to settle their differences, with Soviet urging, thus ending the latest phase of Kurdish insurrection in Iraq. [REDACTED]

With the fall of the Shah earlier this year, the resulting general domestic instability has encouraged Kurdish separatism in Iran and could reignite Kurdish separatism throughout the Kurdish ethnic area. Because of the serious US policy implications of such a possibility, NITO has prepared the following summary. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

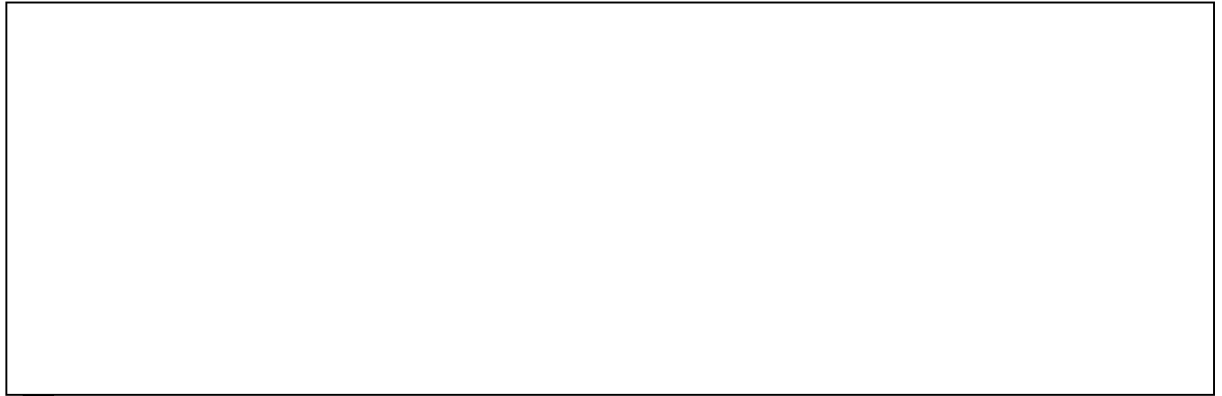
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HUMINT

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Overall HUMINT collection against the Kurdish problem is in the poor to fair range

State reporting emanates from diplomatic posts in the three countries, neighboring regional countries and the Soviet Union. Reporting from Turkey is good to excellent on Kurdish tribal and political organizations and leadership groups but poor on the other objectives. High quality reporting on the former comes mainly from the Consulate in

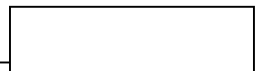
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Adana. The Turks do not restrict travel by consular officers in Adana as they do embassy officers, and most of the Kurdish areas are in the Adana consular district. If the post is closed this fiscal year, much of State's reporting on Kurds in Turkey will cease. State reporting from the embassy in Iran and the interests section in Iraq is much more limited, due to stringent travel restrictions and political constraints. There are Defense Attache offices in Turkey and Iran, both of which operate under the same constraints as State. Defense has no attache in Baghdad. There is an active collection program on the Kurdish problem in Turkey.

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As for Iran, CIA/DDO has in the last two months tasked all appropriate assets and liaison services for reporting on Kurds and the Kurdish problem, and has stepped up efforts to develop new sources of information on this subject.

OPEN SOURCES

Open-source collection against the objectives is quite limited, due not only to the scarcity of Kurdish-originated media, but also to the lack of forthright reporting on the Kurdish problem by non-Kurdish media in the three countries in question. FBIS currently has no Kurdish-language capability, but is attempting to recruit appropriate personnel. Once that capability is established, Kurdish-language publications and broadcasts that are accessible will be exploited to determine intelligence value.

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